

THE RITUAL OF MANUSCRIPTS

DR. KALI KUMAR DUTTA

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Charity (dāna) as a pious act received recognition in India from the earliest period of its history. So we hear of the Dānastutis in the hymns of the R̄gveda¹ and they are echoed in the Kuntāpa hymns of the Atharvaveda.² The Mahābhārata³ also speaks in eulogy of the acts of charity on a number of occasions. It was perhaps a feeble attempt at economic readjustment devised by the authors of the religio-social system prevailing in ancient India. In order to induce men to the acts of charity, various religious merits yielding tempting results, specially in the life beyond death, have been promised which the man of the bygone ages with his firm faith in the transmigration of the soul and the theory of action had no difficulty to believe in all seriousness. The recommendations for charity, however, were made with a note of caution. It has been said that the gifts should be made to a deserving man, otherwise it will be detrimental to the good of both, the donor and the donee.⁴ It also has been advised that the gift should be sufficient for the satisfaction of the donee.⁵

Gift of knowledge (vidyādāna) is an interesting item in the list of the objects of charity in ancient India. It is included in the variety of gift called 'atidāna' or charity par excellence. This clearly shows how education in ancient India was extremely popular and held in high esteem even by the common people. Three kinds of gifts, namely, the gift of the cow, land and learning are known as 'atidāna' and the Śāstras, in order to induce the donors, speak of a number of incentives in the form of benefits to be accrued to the lot of the donor for the act of charity. It has been said that the donor is assured of his stay in heaven (svarga) as the milk is enjoyed by the donee. As the land given in charity yields various types of crop, the donor is sure to get all his desires fulfilled in heaven.

1. R̄gveda, I. 126; I. 130. 6; I. 61. 4; X. 117.

2. Atharvaveda, XX. 127-136.

3. Mahābhārata (Gītā Press edition, Gorakhpur, 1956), XII. 234. 14-38; XIII. 7-8; 22; 57-67; 69; 73; 76; 79-80; 98; 112; 120-121; 134; 145; XIV. 92 and elsewhere.

4. "Go-bhū-tila-hiranyādi pātre dātavyam arcitam /
Nāpātre viduṣā kiṁcid ātmānah śreya icchatā //
Vidyā-tapobhyāṁ hinenā na tu grāhyah pratigrahah /
grhṇan pradātāram adho nayaty ātmānam eva ca" //
—Yājñavalkya, I. 201-202.

5. "Dātā dānam tathā dadyād yathā tuṣyeta tena sah" /
—Mahābhārata, op. cit. XIII. 145.

As the donee overcomes various difficulties by dint of his knowledge acquired from the books received as a gift, the donor also gets rid of all troubles here in his life and is sure to be rewarded with Supreme Bliss after his death.⁶ In the three worlds there is no pious deed that can stand as a match for the gift of learning. So, the best efforts should be made for making a gift of learning.⁷ Normally gift of knowledge means free teaching which was one of the duties essential for a Brahmin.⁸ The Mahābhārata praises highly of such a free gift of learning.⁹ Even financial help given in aid of learning has been encouraged as a pious act.¹⁰ The scope of 'vidyā-dāna', however, was not limited to teaching or financial help alone, but its scope was extended to the gift of books (i.e., manuscripts) and other accessories of learning by the Sūtras.¹¹ It is also noteworthy that the recommendations for these gifts are made not only for acquiring religious merits on the part of the donor for his narrow selfish end, but they are made from a broader humanitarian consideration too. It has been recommended that every righteous person should always make his best endeavours to be a donor of learning for propagating knowledge. Because without knowledge no man can distinguish between right and wrong.¹² By the way of encouragement, it has also been said that the very sight of a donor of learning purifies a man from all his sins.¹³ The gift of knowledge

6. Hayasīśa-pañcarātra, Saṅkarṣaṇakāṇḍa (II), 31. 48-50. (This book is shortly to be published in Bibliotheca Indica.)

7. loc. cit., 31. 55. also—

“Vidyādānāt param dharmaḥ na bhūto na bhaviṣyati” /
—Viṣṇudharmottara, (Venkateswar Press ed.), 3. 303, 1-4.

8. “Adhyāpanam adhyayanaṁ yajanaṁ yājanāṁ tathā /
Dānaṁ pratigrahaṇaṁ caiva Brāhmaṇānāṁ akalpayat” // —Manu, I. 88.

9. Mahābhārata, op. cit., XIII. 145. (Vol. IV. pp. 234)

10. “Dāpanam tv aṭha vidyānāṁ ḍaridrebhyo’rthavedanaiḥ /
Svayam dattena tulyaṇi syād iti viddhi śubhānane” // (loc. cit.)

11. “Vidyādānam avāpnoti pradānāt pustakasya ca” /
—Viṣṇudharmottara, cited by Hemādri in Caturvargacintāmaṇi, Dānakhaṇḍa, Ed., Vol. I. Bharatacandra Śiromāṇi, Bibliotheca Indica, 1873, pp. 544 ff.

12. “Dharmādharmāṇa jānāti loko’yam vidyayā vinā /
Tasmāt sadaiva dharmātman vidyādāna-rato bhavet” //
(Vahnipurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)
“Dharmādharmāṇa jānānti vidyādāna-bahiṣkṛtāḥ /
Tasmāt sarva-prayatnena vidyādānaṁ prayacchati” //
(Varāhapurāṇa, cited op. cit.)

13. “Anena vidhinā yas tu vidyādānaṁ prayacchati /
Sa bhavet sarvalokānāṁ darśanād aghanāśanāḥ” //
(Devīpurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)

therefore, yields both visible (dr̥ṣṭa) and invisible (adr̥ṣṭa) results.¹⁴ The procedure of the gift of learning recommended by the Śāstras are elaborate and expensive and the general principle is that the gifts should be made proportionate to the resources of the donor without niggardliness.¹⁵ It is obvious, therefore, that the whole affair was beyond the reach of the poor. But the authors of the Śāstras are considerate enough even for the members of the society with lean resources. They recommend that a poor man also is entitled to the merits of making a gift of learning just like a rich man,¹⁶ if he gives as his means permit (yathāśaktyā),¹⁷ such puny accessories of learning as a pen, an ink-pot, leaves for writing, a board for writing, a piece of cloth with a thread for wrapping, a piece of cloth for laying the book on (pustakāstaraṇam), a seat, a canopy, a casket for the book, a book-couch (yantrakam) and the like to a man of learning.¹⁸ An interesting feature of the recommendations for making gifts of books is that they are to be made not only to the individuals, but also to the

14. "Vidyayā vartate loko dharmādharmam ca vindati /
Tasmād vidyā sadā deyā dr̥ṣṭādṛ̥ṣṭa-phalārthibhiḥ" //

(Devīpurāṇa, cited in Lakṣmīdhara's Kṛtyakalpataru, Dānakhaṇḍa, Ed. GOS., No. XCII, 1941, Vol. V. pp. 200 ff.)

15. Skandapurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.

16. "Ātmavittānusāreṇa vidyādānam karoti yaḥ /
Asādhyam phalam āpnoti ādhyatulyam na samśayah" //
(Devīpurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)

17. Hayasīrṣa, II. 31. 24, op. cit.

18. "Yo dadyāt sapbalam patram maśibhājana-lekhanīm /
Anyām likhanasāmagrīm yat sūkṣmam api kiṁ cana /
So'pi prāpnoti tat puṇyam yad vidyādānam smṛtam" //
(Hayasīrṣa, II. 31. 53-54., op. cit.)

"Yo'pi patram maśipātrām lekhanisamputādikam /
Laghu śāstrābhīuktāya te'pi vidyāpradāyinām /
Yānti lokān śubhān martyāḥ puṇyabhājō narādbipa" //

Nandipurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.; also Vallāla's Dānasāgara, Chap. 43, Ed. Bhavatosh Bhattacharya, Bibliotheca Indica, 1953-56.

The Nandipurāṇa is now lost to us. Passages from it are quoted in some Smṛti works like the Caturvargacintāmaṇi, Dānasāgara, Kṛtyakalpataru, Vidhāna-pārijāta, Aparārka's Commentary on Yājñavalkya etc. I am grateful to my esteemed colleague in the Department Dr. R.C. Hazra for these references. See also his Studies in the Upapurāṇas, Vol. II, Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series, No. XXII, pp. 484f.

temples or to the libraries specially built for preservation of books.¹⁹ Such donations, however, were obligatory to the followers of the Buddhist and the Jain creeds.²⁰ Erection of library buildings also formed a part of the gift of learning and special religious merits are attached to it. There are also recommendations for building audience halls in connection with the gift of learning, where public recital of books are to be held.²¹ The available texts that recommend such gift of learning are not very old, possibly not older than the 7th century A. D., but the tradition they preserve for us certainly originated much earlier. In the *Mahābhārata*²² we have a traditional story which tells us that Gaṇeśa as a scribe wrote the first manuscript of the great Epic dictated to him by the great sage Vyāsa. This story, however, has been held to be an interpolation, but still the fact remains that writing of manuscripts in India started in the hoary past. From a tradition current among the Buddhists we come to know that immediately after the death of Buddha, the canons were written on Palmyra leaves.²³ Some foreigners' accounts also evince the custom of writing manuscripts on leaves, barks of trees, cloths and such other materials in the remote past. Q. Curtius refers to the Indian custom of writing on tender barks of trees as early as the time of Alexander's invasion and Nearchos refers to the custom of writing on well-beaten cloth in the 4th century B. C.²⁴ The fragments of some Palm-leaf manuscripts belonging to the Kushana period discovered from Turfan in central Asia unmistakably point to the history of writing manuscripts in India that started long before the Christian era.²⁵ In a country like India where means of transport were notoriously meagre and slow, the promptness with which manuscripts were written and carried to the distant parts of this country, is an interesting fact to

19. "Pradadyād vibhavair divyaiḥ surāyatana-veśmasu" /

(Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri op. cit.)

"Tasmin puṇyāhaśabdena vidyākośagrham nyaset /
Evam yaḥ śiva-vidyāyāḥ kuryād āyatanaṁ śubham /
Sa muktaḥ pātakaiḥ sarvair vidyādānaphalam labhet" //

(Skandapurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

20. Bühler, Indian Palaeography, Reprint, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 148.

21. "Vidyāmaṇḍalakam kṛtvā-vidyā-vyākhyāna-maṇḍape /
Tatrābhycya śivāṁ vidyāṁ tad-vyākhyām śṛṇuyāt tataḥ" //

(Skandapurāṇa, loc. cit.)

22. *Mahābhārata*, ibid., I. i.74-83.

23. Life of Hiuen Tsiang, Beal, pp. 117.

24. Bühler, Indian Palaeography, op. cit., pp. 23.

25. Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen, Lüders, Berlin, 1911.

note. To cite a few instances we may refer to the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha, which was written in Orissa sometime in the neighbourhood of 1350 A. D. We have a copy of the same at Jammu copied in 1384 A. D.²⁶ Sarvanānda wrote his *Tīkāsarvasva* on the *Amarakośa* in 1159 A. D. But no manuscript of this work was found in Bengal. All the seven copies utilized by the editor of this work were obtained in the Deccan and all of them are written in Malayalam character.²⁷ Śūlapāṇi wrote his *Śrāddha-viveka* in *Mithilā* some time between 1420 and 1430 A. D. and within a few years *Smṛtiratnahāra* written in Bengal cites a number of passages from this work.²⁸

The history of the gift of learning started possibly with *Brahmadāna*, that is, the gift of the *Vedas*. *Brahmadāna* has been praised as the best of all *dānas*. Cf.

“*Sarveṣām eva dānānām brahmadānam viśisyate*” / (*Manu*, IV. 233)
Yājñavalkya echoes it :

“*Sarvadharmaṇyam brahma pradāne’ bhyadhikam yataḥ /*
Tat dadat samavāpnoti brahmalokam avicyutam” // (I. 212)

Yama, however, seems to widen the scope by addition of the gifts of *Śāstras* also. Cf.

“*Ya imām pṛthivīm dadyāt sarvakāmopaśobhitām /*
Dadyāt śāstram ca viprāṇām tadvac caitāni tatsamam” //
 (Cited in *Kṛtyakalpataru*, op. cit. pp. 201)

According to the *Skandapurāṇa* the four *Vedas*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the texts of the followers of the *Pāñcarātra* and all other works that are in the line of the aforesaid works, are called *Śāstras*.²⁹ Subsequently the scope has been considerably widened to include almost all the branches of knowledge current in those days. To cite a few instances we may refer to the *Nandipurāṇa*.³⁰ This work holds that ‘*vidyā*’ mainly comprises of the *Vedas*, the six ancillary sciences (*Ṣaḍāṅgāni*), *Dharmaśāstra*, Logic, *Purāṇa* and *Mīmāṃsā*. It, however, speaks of the

26. Catalogue of MSS. at Jammu, Stein, pp. 64. (This of course does not suggest that the manuscript was copied at Jammu.)

27. *Tīkāsarvasva*, Ed. TSS., No. XXXVIII, 1911, Preface, pp. 2.

28. I. H. Q., Vol. XVII, 1941, pp. 465.

29. “*Rgyajuḥsāmātharvā ca bhāratam pāñcarātrakam /*
Mūla-rāmāyaṇam caiva śāstram ity abhidhīyate //
Yac cānukūlam etasya tac ca śāstram prakīrtitam” /
 (Cited by *Mādhavācārya* in *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, under *Pūrṇaprajñadarśana*)

30. Cited in *Lakṣmīdhara*’s *Kṛtyakalpataru*, V., op. cit.

knowledge of the Soul, i.e., 'ātmavidyā' as the best of all 'vidyās'.³¹ There are a large number of varieties of 'vidyā' that came into being as derivative sciences of the principal 'vidyā' of which the merits of Āyurveda (Medical science), and Sasyaveda (the science of Agriculture) have been specially emphasised.³² The list includes among others the knowledge of Fine Art and Crafts, Verses, puzzles, Gāthās³³ and even anthological collections.³⁴ In the list given in the Devīpurāṇa we have in addition the names of the Itihāsas (the Great Epics), Siddhāntaśāstras,³⁵ Mokṣaśāstras (philosophical treatises and allied works dealing with salvation), various Tantra works, Astrological and Astronomical sciences, Āgamas and the like.³⁶ The Hayasīrṣa includes the Dharmashastras (Smṛti works) also in the list.³⁷ 'Vidyā' in this text has been taken in a very wide sense to include all those sciences that are conducive of attaining the four ends of man's life, viz., dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa.³⁸

These sources prefer the Bhūrja barks and palm-leaves as materials for writing. Palm-leaves for writing manuscripts were specially selected and treated for that purpose.³⁹ It has been recommended that the folios of the manuscripts should be twice as broad as the prescribed space for writing.⁴⁰ It has been directed that normally a space measuring about

31. "Saṅgaṅgā vedāś catvāro dharmaśāstram purātanam /
Mimāṃsā tarkam api ca etā vidyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ" //.....
"Sarvottarā cātmavidyā samsārabhaya-nāśini" /

32. "Āsāmevāntarotpannāḥ parā vidyāḥ sahasraśāḥ /
Āyurvedāḥ sasyavedo vargabhedāḥ prakīrtitāḥ" //

33. 'Gāthā' here means a song or a prakrit verse or both.

34. "Ślokāṇi prahelikāṇi gāthām athānyad vā subhāṣitam" /

35. The Yogiyājñavalkya (Ed. Poona, 1951) gives the list of Siddhāntas :
"Hairaṇyagarbhaiḥ kāpilair apāṃtarataramais tathā /
Sanatkumārabrahmiṣṭhais tathā pāsupatair api /
Pañcarātraiḥ sadonmuktaiḥ siddhāntair atra saptabhiḥ" // (II. 67-8)

36. Cited in Kṛtyakalpataru, V., op. cit., p. 201.

37. HŚP., II. 31. 59., op. cit.

38. Loc. cit., 31. 61.
"Dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇām yā vidyā siddhaye matā /
Tāṇi lekhyā brāhmaṇe dattvā svargam āpnaty asaṃśayam" //

39. "Śrītāḍapatrake sañce same patra-susañcīte" /
(Devīpurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)

40. "Kuryāt tu pustakam tatra lekhyād dviguṇavistṛtam" /
(Dānasāgara, op. cit., pp. 478)

two fingers in width should be covered by writing.⁴¹ This space was sometimes demarcated by drawing borderlines according to the choice of the scribe.⁴²

The writing is expected to be handsome and smooth.⁴³ Each letter shall have its full form written distinctly with proper strokes at the top, forming a row in a straight line and each of them should be of equal size.⁴⁴ The letters should be equal at their toplines and they must be sufficiently thick.⁴⁵ They should neither be too thin nor too thick, the signs for short and long should be distinctly shown, having full forms with proper strokes, dots and combinations clearly discernible in them.⁴⁶

The Nāgara script seems to be the most popular one, but there are also references to Nandi script and Kashmir script (Sāradā script ?). The Agnipurāṇa speaks of the Nāgara script alone.⁴⁷ The Hayasīrṣa has both the Nāgara and the Kashmir scripts.⁴⁸ The Devīpurāṇa⁴⁹ speaks of 'Nandi-nāgarakair varṇaiḥ' but the implication of this expression is not free from ambiguity. Nandi is a sacred class of writings of the Jains. Possibly the script generally used for such writings has been referred to

41. "Kuryāc ca pustakam tasya likhed dvyaṅgulavistṛtam" /
(Nandipurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)

42. "Kṛṣṇamecakitam ca vā"—Kṛṣṇamecakitam maśinirmita-samaya jñādi-likhanā-nuguṇaśyāmārekhām—(Dānasāgara, op. cit.). The implication of this exposition, however, is not very clear. Hemādri reads—"Kṛṣṇam mecakitam ca vā" and explains 'mecakitam' as 'mayūrārdha-candrāñkitam' which also does not fit in well with the context. The prevailing custom, however, tends to support the drawing of border-lines for demarcating the writing space.

43. "Śubham ślakṣṇam ca ramyam ca" /
(Nandipurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.)

44. "Śirśopetān susampūrṇān samaśrenīgatān samān /
Akṣarān vai likhed yas tu lekhakāḥ sa varah smṛtaḥ" //
(Matsyapurāṇa, cited in the Vācaspatya of Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati)

45. "Samaśīrṣaiḥ sumāṁsalaiḥ" / —HSP. II. (op. cit.), 31. 10.

46. "Nātikṛṣair nātisthūlair hrasvā-dīrghādilakṣitaiḥ /
Sampūrṇāvayavair mātrā-bindu-saṁyogalakṣitaiḥ" // Loc. cit., 31. 11.

47. Agnipurāṇa, Ānandāśrama edition, 63. 15.

48. HSP. II., op. cit., 31. 10.
"Kāśmirair nāgarair varṇaiḥ" /

49. Devīpurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.

here. The Nandipurāṇa prefers the Nāgara script, but it also approves the use of regional scripts for copying the Śāstras.⁵⁰

The pen to be used for ceremonial writings should be, according to the Śāstras, made of gold⁵¹ but from the reference to the 'lekhaniśastra'⁵² in this connection, it appears that pens made of other materials like reeds, quills etc., that require mending with a knife-like instrument, were also used. Possibly the word 'citrābhiḥ' in the expression "Lekhanībhiḥ ca divyābhir hemacitrābhir eva ca" in the Nandipurāṇa⁵³ refers to such pens. It is interesting to note here that Kṣemendra (11th century A. D.) uses the word 'kalama' in the sense of a pen.⁵⁴

The inkpot for such ceremonial occasions is to be made of silver.⁵⁵ But the gift of an inkpot recommended for a poor man suggests that it was made of other cheaper materials also. The Nandipurāṇa does not specifically mention the metal to be used for making the inkpot, but simply says : 'susamiddhe maśibhāṇḍe'⁵⁶ which means a lustrous or splendid pot. The ink used was of different kinds and colours of which yellow, red, green and black were preferred. In order to make the ink

50. "Vyaktadeśalipinyāśaṁ mukhyāṁ nāgaram ucyate" /

—Nandipurāṇa, cited in Kṛtyakalpataru, op. cit., pp. 216 which explains : "Vyaktā taddeśānusāriṇi lipir yatra nyāsc' kṣara-nirmāṇe sa tathā". Hemādri reads :

"Vyaktadeśalipinyāśaṁ vyaktāṁ nāgaram ucyate /

Vyaktadeśalipinyāśaṁ vyaktoddeśānusāriṇi" // (op. cit.)

It is obvious that there must be something wrong with this citation and Lakṣmīdhara has nothing like the second line of this quotation. So, we accept Lakṣmīdhara's version.

51. "Lekhanyā haimyā śuciḥ" /

—HŚP, II, 31, 10. op. cit.

"Haimyā ca lakhanyā /

—Agnipurāṇa, 63, 15. op. cit.

"Sauvarṇalakhanī kāryā" /

—Varāhapurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.

"Lekhanībhiḥ ca divyābhir hemacitrābhir eve ca" /

—Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.

52. "Lekhaniśastra-samyukte"—Dānasāgara, op. cit. pp. 480.

53. Hemādri, op. cit.

54. With reference to a clerk he writes :

"Maśi sakalamā yasya" /

—Narmamālā, I, 16., Ed. Kashmir Sanskrit Series, No. 40, 1923.

"Kalamāṅkitakarṇena bhūrjapatrakapāṇinā" / —Ibid, II, 120.

55. "Raupye pātre maśīṁ sthāpya" /

—HŚP, II, 31, 10. op. cit.

"Maśibhāṇḍaṁ ca raupyakam" / —Varāhapurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.

56. Hemādri, op. cit.

permanent various preservative ingredients were mixed with the ink.⁵⁷ The ink thus treated endured for long centuries as we see that the ink inscription in the inner side of the lid of the relic vessel found in the Stūpa at Andher belonging to C. 2nd/3rd Century B. C.,⁵⁸ did not fade out still and the ink of the Turfan manuscripts still remains fresh. The outer page of a manuscript is called 'malapatra'⁵⁹ or 'malaprsthā' and this page was sometimes coloured with yellow, red or brown pigments and was decorated with beautiful designs and pictures.⁶⁰

The folios of the manuscripts were held together in their serial order by means of a thread passing through the hole made for this purpose generally at the centre. This thread was often of light red or black colour.⁶¹ It has been directed that the thread should be loosened just at the time of reading and it should be fastened again as soon as the reading was over. On no occasion, however, the manuscript should be handled with its thread loosened⁶² and this note of warning is made obviously for preventing any possible damage of the manuscript due to careless handling. Manuscripts were wrapped with a fine piece of silken or coloured cloth.⁶³ References are made to caskets and boxes for keeping the manuscripts safely and arrangements for lock and key also were advised.

57. "Maśibhiś cāpy anekābhiś caturvarṇābhir eva vā /

Dṛḍhastambhana-yuktābhir mecakaś cāpy anekaśah" //

—Nandipurāṇa, cited in Dānasaṅgara, op. cit. pp. 479, which explains 'caturvarṇābhiḥ'—'Pita-rakta-harita-kṛṣṇa-varṇadravyarasamayibhiḥ'. Hemādri reads :

"Maśibhiś cāpi naikābhiḥ" /

etc. and he explains 'dṛḍhastambhanayuktābhiḥ'—'maśisthairyahetuḥ'.

58. Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, pp. 249.

59. Cf. "Lajjate malapatreṇa cakranārācasāñcaye" /

—Kṣemendra in Deśopadeśa, VI. 10., Ed. Kashmir Sanskrit Series, No. 40, 1923. Possibly the Bengali word 'malāt' meaning the outer page of a book owes its origin to the Sanskrit word 'malapatra'.

60. "Bahiś ca varṇam kurvita pustakasya manoramam /

Pitai raktaī kaśayair vā sunibaddham vicitritam" //

(Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

61. "Kārpāsasūtra-grathitam"—Loc. cit.,

"Raktena vātha kṛṣṇena mṛḍunā raṅgitena ca /

Dṛḍhasūtranibaddhena evam̄ vidhikṛtena ca" // (Devipurāṇa, loc. cit.)

62. "Granthīm ca śithilam kuryād vāckāḥ kurunandana /

Punar badhnīta tatsūtram na muktvā dhārayet kvacit" //

—(Cited in Vācaspatya, op. cit.)

63. "Divyapaṭṭāṁśukāvṛtam"—HSP. II. 31, 6., op. cit.

The Devīpurāṇa⁶⁴ speaks of a casket for providing a protective cover to the manuscripts which consisted of a frame of bamboo-sticks on its sides and the entire body covered with leather to form a casket. The Skandapurāṇa⁶⁵ refers to the caskets for manuscripts made either of Śriparṇa⁶⁶ or of leather with deep cavity having sufficient room for holding the manuscripts.⁶⁷ From the same source we come to know that square-shaped boxes fitted with lids were also kept in the libraries for preserving manuscripts. These boxes were perfectly designed and they were made either of gold studded with jewels, or of silver, or copper or bell-metal, or brass or iron. Sometimes boxes made of wood or bamboo also were used. There is also a reference to chests with the arrangements for lock and key.⁶⁸

Normally manuscripts were placed on a piece of cloth known as 'pustakāstaraṇa', i.e., a 'book-spread', or on a seat or mattress when they were read.⁶⁹ In connection with the ceremonies, however, we hear of a furniture which we prefer to call a 'book-couch'. It is called 'Śarayantra' and has been variously named as 'Sarayantra', 'Sarapatra', and 'Śivayantra'.⁷⁰ Nandipurāṇa⁷¹ calls it 'vidyādhāra' or 'vidyādhara'. Devīpurāṇa⁷² refers to it as 'yantra' or 'yantraka'. It was made of such

64. "Vicitrakañcikā pārśve carmaṇā sampuṭikṛte" /
'Kañcikā'—'veṇuśākhā'. (Devīpurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

65. Cited by Hemādri, op. cit.

66. Śriparṇa means—a lotus, Araṇī, (also called Gaṇiyārī) and Gāmbhāri tree. Here obviously the wood is meant.

67. "Yah Śriparṇasamudbhūtām nimnakhātām susañcayam /
Dadyāt sampuṭakām kṛtvā carmaṇā vāpi nirmitam" //

68. "Yah sauvarṇām susampūrṇām sarvaratnopasobhitam /
Sapidhānasumañjūṣām vidyākoṣa-samāśrayam //
Kārayed vāpi raupyeṇa tāmreṇa caturasrakam /
Kārpsyārakūṭalohām vā dāru-vamśādinirmitam" //
"Kuryāt tālakasāmpyuktām vidyāratnakaraṇḍakam" /

(Skandapurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

69. "Pustakāstaraṇam dattvā supramāṇam suśobhanam" /
(Devīpurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

"Pustakāstaraṇam dattvā sahasram tatpramāṇataḥ /
Tadāsanām vitānam vā śivaloke mahiyate" // (Skandapurāṇa, loc. cit.)

70. Vide—Dānasāgara, op. cit., pp. 489, fn. 3.

71. Vidyādhāra and vidyādhara—both readings are available. See Vallāla and Hemādri, op. cit.

72. "Tasya madhye nyased Yantrām nāgadantamayam śubham" /
(Devīpurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)
"Yantrakām cāsanām caiva daṇḍāsanam athāpi vā" / Loc. cit.

materials as gold, silver, ivory or some better quality of wood. It should not be heavy but be a thing nice to look at. It should have a subtle mechanical device with the help of which it can be folded and unfolded according to the requirement. It should be spacious and if it is made of wood, there should not be any timber-knot in the selected piece of wood. There should be hinges for its folding.⁷³ From the descriptions it appears to be a sort of X-shaped hinged folding book-couch. The Jains, the Sikhs and the Mohamedans still to-day place their sacred books on such a wooden device for convenience of reading. Devīpurāṇa⁷⁴ speaks of a crude form of this device made of ivory which was fastened slightly in its lower part but tightly fastened at the top by means of a strong piece of thread. The Hayaśīrṣa⁷⁵ speaks of a Daṇḍāsana also to be used for the same purpose which should be made of gold studded with precious stones. The text, however, does not describe it. The Devīpurāṇa⁷⁶ also refers to Daṇḍāsana. A throne (Simhāsana) made of ivory or such other materials may also be used for this purpose. Possibly it was a desk-like furniture specially built for ceremonial purposes. Wooden desks of low height are still in use in Bengal for reading and writing purposes.

Now, this 'Śarayantra' requires careful consideration as it has given rise to some confusion. In the Vāsavadattā of Subandhu⁷⁷ we have a passage which refers to 'śarayantra'. It runs as follows : "Raktāṁśukapaṭe viśamaprarūḍhavisalatā - śarayantrakānugata śatapatra - pustaka - sanāthe

73. "Vidyādhāram prakurvita hemarūpyamayam śubham /
Nāgadantamayam vāpi śubhadārumayam tathā //
Manojñam agurum ramyam ślakṣṇayantra-prayogajam /
Saṁkocapatrasaṁyuktam vikāsena saīanvitam //
Tatra vidyām vinihitām kuryāt pustakasamhitām" //

(Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.). For 'saṁkocapatra' Vallāla' reads— 'saṁkocayantra' but Lakṣmīdhara has 'saṁkocavastra'. For other variants we are not interested here.

"Ramyam laghu suvistīrṇam nirgranthi granthisaṁyutam /
Vidyādhāram tato yantrasaṁsthitam pūrvapustakam" //

—Loc. cit., Lakṣmīdhara reads 'nīhśrānta' for 'nirgranthi' and 'sthāpitam' for 'saṁsthitam'.

74. "Tasya madhye nyased yantram nāgadantamayam śubham /
Adhaḥ kiñcīn nibaddham tu ūrdhvato'pi susaṁyutam //
Tasyordhvam vinyased vidvān pustakam likhitam śubham" / —Loc. cit.

75. "Tatra saṁsthāpayed dhimān śarayantrāsanam śubham /
Daṇḍāsanam vā śrimantaṁ hemaratnādi-nirmitam //
Śrimat simhāsanam vāpi nāgadantādinirmitam /
Tatra saṁsthāpayed dhimān pustakadvitayam guruh" // (II.31.4-5)

76. "Yantrakam cāsanam caiva daṇḍāsanam athāpi vā" /
(Devīpurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

77. Ed. Hall, Bibliotheca Indica, 1859, p. 250.

makarandabindusandohanirbhara pānamatta - madhukara-sāndramandra - mañjuśvanaiḥ svadharmaṁ iva paṭhati vikacakamalākara-bhikṣau" etc. Explaining this passage in his gloss named 'darpaṇa' Śivarāma Tripāṭhin (18th Century A. D.) writes: "Śarayantrakanī tālapatriya-pustakamādhyarajjuḥ... 'Sarata' iti bhāṣāyām". So, the Śarayantraka, according to him, is the thread that runs through the pages of a palm-leaf manuscript. Monier Williams and V. S. Apte seem to follow him in their Sanskrit-English Dictionaries. But apart from the appropriateness of the explanation of the passage concerned, the meaning of the word 'śarayantra' given by Śivarāma does not stand scrutiny. The Hayaśīrṣa (C. 8th century A. D.) clearly states that the 'śarayantra' is meant for placing the book on it and an equally ancient text Agnipurāṇa⁷⁸ confirms it. Vallāla⁷⁹ (12th century A. D.) identifies 'vidyadhara' with 'śarayantra' leaving no room for any doubt. The 'śarayantra' was, however, not convenient for writing. It was perhaps due to this fact that the Hayaśīrṣa makes provisions for 'daṇḍāsana' and 'siṁhāsana' made of ivory or some other materials on that occasion. Devīpurāṇa also speaks of the 'daṇḍāsana'.⁸⁰

A Siamese variety of this device, however, appears to improve the 'Sara-yantra' in such a manner that it is convenient for both the purposes, viz., for placing the original manuscript and also for copying.

In the first decade of this century Montgomery Schuyler (J. A. O. S., vol. 29, 1908, pp. 281-83) saw the Siamese Buddhist monks using a kind of 'Sara-yantra' for copying palm-leaf manuscripts. He gives an interesting account of the device. He writes:—"Each copyist has in front of him, as he squats on the floor of the temple, a frame about 18" inches in height somewhat resembling an artist's easel, on one ledge of which rests the manuscript to be copied, and on the other ledge the blank leaves for the new volume".

From the description it becomes obvious that the said device is only a variety of its Indian counterpart or it may be what is called 'Daṇḍāsana' in the Hayaśīrṣa and Devīpurāṇa, but for the paucity of evidences we cannot be sure of it.

According to the sanctions of the Sāstras a properly qualified scribe (lekhaka) is to be appointed for the ceremonial writing with the prescribed procedure. In a number of ancient texts the scribes are described as forming a special class known as 'kāyastha'.⁸¹ Those scribes were generally

78. "Svastike maṇḍale'bhyarcya śarayantrāsane sthitam /
Lekhyam ca likhitam pustam gurur vidyām harim yajet" // (63. 13-14)

79. Dānasāgara, op. cit., pp. 478.

80. Vide fn. 76 supra.

81. "Lekhakān api kāyasthān lekhakṛtye vicakṣaṇān" /
(Parāśara, cited in Vācaspatya, op. cit.)

employed in the law-courts and various other departments of the state. They were well-versed in different branches of learning and were expert in different regional scripts.⁸² An interesting account of a court-clerk is to be found in the drama *Mṛcchakaṭika* ascribed to Śūdraka.⁸³ We have also an instance of recording of a General's report on the achievements of warriors in the battlefield by the scribes of the state archives in the *Pañcarātra* ascribed to be Bhāsa.⁸⁴ A section of such scribes are subject to the bitter attack by Kṣemendra in his satire entitled *Narmamālā*.⁸⁵ For ceremonial purposes, however, a Brahmin scribe was a necessity, who must have a sound knowledge of the Vedas and be thoroughly acquainted with the science of metrics.⁸⁶ 'Pustaka-lekhaka' is the term that the *Devīpurāṇa* uses to denote such a scribe possibly with a view to distinguish him from the 'kāyastha' scribe. The 'pustaka-lekhaka' must be a man well-versed in the Śāstras, adept in prosody, himself a good poet, endowed with sweet voice and capable of restoring lost readings from memory.⁸⁷ The *Matsyapurāṇa*⁸⁸ adds that the scribe must be a master of scripts, should have a swift hand and must be able to comprehend the meaning as soon as the word is uttered. The *Hayasīrṣa*⁸⁹ holds that the ceremonial

82. "Sarvadeśāksarābhijñah sarvaśāstra-vicakṣaṇah /
lekhakah kathito rājñah sarvādhikaraṇeṣu vai" // —Loc. cit.

83. In Act IX.

84. "Bhaṭah—Drṣṭa-parispandānām yodhapuruṣāṇām karmāṇi pustakam āropayati kumārah"—Act II. between verses 27 & 28.

85. "Tuṣṭas tam etya varadaḥ kalih sākṣād abhāṣata /
Sarvadeva-vināśāya gaccha vatsa mahitalam //
Anena kalamāstreṇa maddatṭena prahāriṇā" // —op. cit., I. 11-12.

86. "Brāhmaṇān vedasampūrnāṁśchandolakṣaṇapāragān" /
(Vahnipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

87. "Tathā sampūjayed vatsa lekhakam śāstra-pāragam /
Chandolakṣaṇa-tatvajñām satkavīm madhurasvaram //
Pranaṣṭām smarati granthām śreṣṭham pustakalekhakam" / —loc. cit.

88. "Sakṛdukta-gṛhitārtho laghuhasto jitākṣarāḥ /
Sarvaśāstra-samālokī prakṛṣṭo nāma lekhakah" //
(Cāṇakyasāṃgraha, cited in Vācaspatya, cit.)

89. "Pañcāvayava-vāksiddhaś chandolakṣaṇavit tathā /
Vākyālāpa-kathābhijñō Viṣṇu-pūjanatparah" //
(op. cit., II. 31. 12-13). The second line, however, may be interpreted differently.

scribe should have, in addition, a perfect knowledge of the science of reasoning. He must be an expert in discourses and sagas and also a consummate devotee of Viṣṇu. The last item, however, is concerned with a sectarian interest only.

The ritual also required the services of a reciter who is known as a 'vācaka' or 'pāṭhaka' or 'kathaka',⁹⁰ whose art has been included in the list of sixtyfour Fine Arts (kalās) enumerated by Vātsyāyana in his Kāma-sūtra (I.3). He must be a Brahmin. The requisite qualifications of the reciter are: he must be a wise man, smart, modest and a good speaker. He must have a sweet voice and should be well-acquainted with the Śāstras, expert in music, adept in deciphering the scripts (abhyastākṣara-vinyāsah), capable of making out the import of words, dexterous in explaining the significance of the Śāstras, reputed for his knowledge of prosody and endowed with the power of flawless speech, adept in distinctly uttering words and syllables according to the requirement.⁹¹ From the lists of his qualifications it becomes clear that the 'vācaka' was not merely a reciter. He had twofold duties to perform. His first duty was to help the scribe to

90. The 'Kathaka' in Eastern India, however, is different from the 'vācaka' or 'pāṭhaka'. He is distinguished for his art 'kathakatā' which comprises of a skilful admixture of reciting, explaining and singing.

91. "Brāhmaṇam vācakam vidyān nānya-varṇajam ādarāt" /.....
 "Saptasvara-samāyuktaṁ kāle kāle viśāmpate /
 Pradarśayan rasān sarvān vācayed vācako nṛpah" // (Vācaspatya, op. cit.)
 "Sarvaśāstrāditattvajño gandharvajñas tu susvarah /
 Vācayed vācakah sustho brāhmaṇah śāstravīc chucih" //
 (HSP., II. op. cit. 31, 34-35)
 "Śāstra-sadbhāvaviduṣe vācaketi priyamvade" /
 —Vahnipurāṇa, cited by Hemādri, op. cit.
 "Brāhmaṇasya suvṛttasya vācakasya vijalpataḥ" / —Varāhapurāṇa, loc. cit.
 "Vācako brāhmaṇah prājñāḥ śrutasāstro mahāmanāḥ /
 Abhyastākṣara-vinyāso vṛttāśāstra-visāradah" //
 "Sabdārthavit pragalbhaś ca vīṇito medhayā punah /
 Gitajño vākyā-suśravyasvaro'nāvilabhaśakah" //
 (Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

correct the copy by reciting from the original.⁹² In this connection some major items of correction have been enumerated. They are⁹³ :

- (i) Letters or words omitted or put in excess should be properly corrected.
- (ii) Defective strokes in the formation of letters should be mended.
- (iii) Correctness of the use of 'anusvāras' and 'visargas' shall be properly looked into.
- (iv) All pros and cons should be properly considered before correcting the cases of repetition.⁹⁴
- (v) In such cases where something is suspected to be missing, the rectification is to be made after proper consideration of the context as well as the metrical propriety.
- (vi) If the work is in the aphoristic style, before correction of any aphorism its relation with other aphorisms, the problems involved and the intended solution offered by the author, should be duly considered.
- (vii) In cases of works written in non-aphoristic style, doubtful cases are to be considered in relation to the significance of the work taken in its entirety.
- (viii) As a rule significance of the whole work, the context, indications (sūcana), references (uddesa) and all that have been either explicitly stated or suggested, should be duly weighed before incorporating any correction.

92. "Ubhayaṁ cāpi tal lekhyam̄ samikuryāc ca vācakam" / —loc, cit.
("Ubhayaṁ lekhyam̄ vācayan samikuryāt"—Hemādri)

93. "Unādhikaiś ca samyuktam̄ varṇair mātrādibhistathā /
Anusvāra-visargaiś ca yuktāyuktair vicārayet //
Śāstram̄ prakṛtayā yukiyā paunaruktyam̄ viśodhayet /
Ūnārthoktyā prasaṅgaiś ca chando-yogyatayā tathā /
Sūtrāntarārthabodhena praśnottara-vivekataḥ /
Asūtratvāc ca śāstrasya samudāyārthabodhataḥ //
Prakṛntasūcanoddeśair gaditaiś coditair api /
Bahvārthānām̄ ca śabdānām̄ yogyāsattim̄ parikṣya tu /
Sarvaśāstrārthabodhena kārakādyair aviplutaiḥ //
Kvacic chabdavivakṣaiś ca prakṛtārtham̄ nirūpayet //
Chandasām̄ cāpi buddhvā tam̄ vṛtta-samyogam̄ īpsitam̄ /
Evam̄ vidyām̄ tu medhāvī śāstram̄ satkṛtya kṛtsnaśah" // —Loc. cit.

(In the 10th line Hemādri reads—"Kvacic ca śabdām̄ varjyaiva" for "Kvacic chabdavivakṣaiś ca" which is the reading accepted by Lakṣmidhara, op. cit., pp. 216)

94. Cf. "Saṅgatiḥ paunaruktyānām̄ samādhāna-samākulam" /
—Abhinavagupta in Abhinavabhrāti, Introductory verse, 6.

(ix) The cases of words having different meanings, the compatibility (*yogyatā*) of the word as well as the proximity (*āsatti*) of the word concerned with other words should also be duly considered before they are corrected.

(x) Proper consideration should also be given to the uses of case-endings and other grammatical processes so that there may not creep in any improper use of them (*kārakādyair aviplutaiḥ*).

(xi) In cases of doubt about the use of a particular word, the word which the author intended to use should be guessed by due consideration of the context. According to Hemādri's version the rule reads as follows : If necessary, a particular word may be omitted if it is helpful to the understanding of the appropriate sense (of the expression concerned).

(xii) If there be any doubt about the metre employed, the intention of the author should similarly be guessed.

It goes without saying that these rules give ample liberty to the reciter and the scribe for the correction of the text. Undoubtedly such a procedure is fraught with the danger of corruption of the manuscript by reckless corrections in the hands of underqualified scribes and reciters. Obviously it is one of the causes that brought forth the widespread corruption of manuscripts in this country. There is another thing to note that there is no idea of collation of different manuscripts of the same work before correction. This is a serious drawback of the recommended method of correction. It is, however, very interesting to note here that Abhinavagupta⁹⁵ (10th century A. D.) hints at the idea of collating different manuscripts for fixing the reading of a doubtful text and also of indicating the unacceptable variants instead of omitting them altogether. His method is much in the line of the modern text-critical method.

The other duty of the scribe was to perform the ceremonial recitation of the text before the audience in conformity with the prescribed rules. The general rule for the ceremonial recitation is : The recitation should be made clearly indicating the rasas or sentiments with the help of the seven svaras.⁹⁶ This direction may create the impression that the ceremonial recitation was identical with singing. Because, the seven svaras to be employed in such recital are the musical notes, viz., *Ṣadja*, *ṛṣabha*,

95. "Upādeyasya sampāṭhas tadanyasya pratikanam /
Sphuṭavyākhyā virodhānāṁ parihārah supūrṇata" // etc.
(Abhinava, op. cit., verses 5-6)

96. "Saptasvarasamāyuktaṁ kāle kāle viśāmpate /
Pradarśayan rasān sarvān vācayed vācako nṛpa" //
—Vācaspatya, op. cit.

gāndhāra, madhyama, pañcama, dhaivata and niśāda, enumerated in the texts on music.⁹⁷ But Abhinava-gupta in his exposition of the text of the Nātyaśāstra ascribed to Bharata makes the distinction between recitation and singing clear in no uncertain terms : "Udāttānudāttā-svarita-kampita-rūpatayā svarāṇāṁ yad rakti-pradhānatvam anuraṇanamayam tattyāgena ucca-nicamadhyama-sthānasparśitvamātram pāṭhyopayogīti darśitam. Yadi hi rasagatā raktili pāṭhye prādhānyenāvalambhyeta tadā gānakriyā asau syāt, na pāṭhah".⁹⁸ He means to say that in course of recitation the voice should touch only the three sthānas, i. e., high, low and middle. It should avoid the resonant affectation of voice with the help of the 'varṇas', viz., udāttā, anudāttā, svarita and kampita as required in singing. If the affectation of voice connected with the rasas are chiefly employed, it will then turn to be singing and not reciting. He also points out some other subtle distinction which we need not enter into for our purpose here. The svaras in this context, therefore, are not the musical notes, but the notes suitable for recital (Pāṭhyasvaras). It will not be out of the place here to mention that the Nātyaśāstra recommends the employment of different svaras for indicating different rasas. Thus the madhyama and pañcama are indicative of Śringāra (erotic) and Hāsyā (Comic); Śadja and ṛṣabha are employed for Vīra (heroic), Raudra (furious) and Adbhuta (marvellous); Gāndhāra and Niśāda are indicative of Karuṇā (pathetic) and Dhaivata is used for expressing Bibhatsa (disgusting) and Bhayānaka (terrible) rasas.⁹⁹

It has been laid down that the reciter must know the significance of the whole work he has got to recite. He should recite it distinctly in a sweet tone with all the words and syllables clearly pronounced. He must do it calmly and not in a hurry. His recitation should be in keeping

97. Cf. "Śadja ṛṣabha-gāndhārau madhyamah pañcamas tathā /
Dhaivataś ca niśādaś ca sapta svarāḥ prakīrtitāḥ" //

(Saṅgitadāmodara, Stavaka, 3, p. 30, Ed. Calcutta Sanskrit College Research series, No. XI. 1960.

98. Ed. GOS., No. LXVIII, Vol. II. pp. 385.

99. NS., GOS., op. cit. Vol. II. XVII, 103-105.

with the sentiments and emotions.¹⁰⁰ According to the *Hayasīrṣa*¹⁰¹ in course of a ceremonial public reading the reciter should recite in a manner which shall be neither too slow, nor too fast and his voice should neither be too loud nor too low. The recitation should be made with appropriate allocation of the eight 'sthānas',¹⁰² distinct articulation of all the sixty-three letters of the alphabet¹⁰³ and proper expression of the sentiments and emotions. Matters related to the erotic sentiment (*Śringārarasa*) should be recited gracefully while those related to pathetic sentiment (*karuṇarasa*) should have the expression of pathos. Matters connected with conflict shall be recited with commotion and impulse. Penance, tranquility and such other matters shall be recited slowly while things related to the metaphysical subjects should be recited slowly with consideration. The *Nandipurāṇa*¹⁰⁴ also has almost the same set of instructions

100. "Viśpaṣṭam adrutam śāntam spaṣṭakṣara-padaṇ tathā /
Kalasvara-samāyuktam rasabhāva-samanvitam //
Budhyamānah sadātyartham granthārtham kṛtsnaśo nṛpa" //
—cited in *Vācaspatya*, op. cit.

101. "Nātīdrutam na vilambai nātyuccam nātīnicakam /
Sarvaśāstrāditattvajñō gāndharvajñas tu susvarah //
Vācayed vācakah sustho brāhmaṇah śāstravīc chuciḥ /
Guruṇā samanujñātas tvaṣṭāsthāna-samanvitam //
Triṣṭivarna-samīyuktam rasabhāvānvitam tathā" //...
"Sarāgam lalitam vācyam kāruṇyam karuṇānvitam /
Dhārāvartakasamīkṣobhair yuddhoktir vācayed budhah //
Tapaḥ-sāmādi yatkiñcit tac chanair vācayed budhah /
Adhyātmādiṣu yat kiñcit tad vivicya śanaiḥ pañhet" //

HSP. II, op. cit., 34-38.

102. "Aṣṭau sthānānī varṇānām uraḥ kaṇṭhaḥ śiras tathā /
jihvāmūlam ca dantās ca nāsikoṣṭhau ca tālu ca" //

—(Pāṇiniyāśikṣā, verse, 13)

103. According to some Tantric traditions current in Bengal there are sixtythree letters in the alphabet. They are : 14 vowels including the long ī ; 9 'pluta-svaras'; 25 'sparśa-varṇas' (consonants); 3 sibilants (ś, ś, s); 1 aspirate (h); 2 semivowels (y,v); one liquid (l); one trilled (r); one glide (ȳ); two flapped (ṭ, ḍ); one conjunct (Kṣ); and the three nasals (ṁ—anusvara, ḥ—visarga, (?) and —(candra-bindu). The *Nātyāśāstra* (op. cit., XVII, 109) speaks of four 'varṇas' in connection with recitation. They are : udātta, anudātta, svarita and kampita. But they are not relevant here.

104. "Evaṇ viḍhānato vācyam vācakena viपaścītā /
Tapahśamātmakam sarvam svargādiphalasādhakam //
Śanair vibodhya vai vācyam adhīyātmādi ca yad bhavet /
Kruddhokti-yuddha-samīkṣobhair dhārāvartena vācayet //
Sarāgam lalitair vākyair vācayed vṛddhāsaṅgame /
Nānā-vṛttānurūpeṇa lālityena ca vācayet" //

'Dhārāvartena' has been explained as 'vegena' by Hemādri. (Hemādri, op. cit.)

but it adds that war, commotion and angry speeches should be recited with impulse and the Śṛṅgārarasa requires a graceful recital just in keeping with the variety of metres employed. In connection with the histrionics, the Nāṭyaśāstra¹⁰⁵ recommends that the three tempos, viz., rapid, middle and slow are to be employed with a view to have the recitation in conformity with the rasas. The middle tempo is meant for expressing the sentiments of erotic and comic, the slow one for the pathetic and the rapid one for expressing the remaining five other sentiments. It also speaks of six 'āṅgas', viz., viccheda, anubandha, arpaṇa, visarga, dīpana and praśamana. 'Viccheda' is the pause to be placed at a particular point. 'Anubandha' is the absence of the pause in between the words or absence of any gap for breathing. 'Arpaṇa' is a mode of recitation by dint of which the recitater fills, as it were, the entire audience-hall with his sweet, attractive and playful tone. 'Visarga' is the utterance of a sentence in a spontaneous manner. 'Dīpana' means the beauteous modulation of voice gradually raising or lowering, according to the requirement, in the three (phonetic) sthānas, namely, uras, kanṭha and śiras, that is, raising the 'scale' from the low to the high, touching the middle one according to the exigency. 'Praśamana' is the gradual descent (decrescendo) of the voice from the higher scale without creating any detestable or defective tone.¹⁰⁶ According to Abhinavagupta these six 'āṅgas' are related to the appropriate modulation of voice (nāda) in course of recitation. 'Anubandha' is continuity while 'viccheda' is detachment. 'Arpaṇa' is the full-throated voice while 'visarga' is just opposite to it. 'Dīpana' means the gradual raising of the voice to the higher scale while 'praśamana' means just reversal of the process.¹⁰⁷ Regarding the employment of these 'āṅgas' the Nāṭya-

105. Referring to the six 'āṅgas' the NS, reads :

"Eṣām ca drutamadhyā-vilambitās trayo layā raseśūpapādyāḥ /
Tatra hāsyā-śṛṅgārayor madhyalayaḥ, karuṇe vilambito
vira-raudrādbhuta-bibhatsa-bhayānakeśu druta Iti" //
(Nāṭyaśāstra, op. cit., Vol. II, XVII. 131, pp. 399)

106. "Athāṅgāni ṣaṭ—vicchedo'ṛpaṇam visargo'nubandho dīpanam praśamanam iti. Tatra vicchedo nāma virāmakṛtaḥ. Arpaṇam nāma līlāyamāna-madhura-valgunā svarena pūrayateva rāṅgam yat paṭhyate tad arpaṇam. Visargo nāma vākyanyāsaḥ. Anubandho nāma padāntareśvavicchedaḥ, anucchvasanam vā. Dīpanam nāma tristhāna-śobhi vardhamāna-svaram ceti. Praśamanam nāma tāra-gatānām svarāṇām praśāmyatām avaisvaryeṇāvatāraṇam iti."—op. cit., XVII. 130, pp. 397. (The GOS. reads 'padānta-resvapi vicchedaḥ' for 'padāntareśvavicchedaḥ' but it is against Abhinava's exposition.)

107. "Tathā ca madhye trūṭitatvam atrūṭitatvam vā tāvato vicchedānubandhau, pīvaratvam apīvaratvam vā imāv arpaṇa-visargau, ārohaṇam avarohaṇam vā te dīpana-praśamane. Evam bhāvābhāvataḥ, upacayāpacayataḥ, ārohāvārohataś ca ṣaḍ-bhedo nādaḥ." —Loc. cit.

śāstra¹⁰⁸ recommends that for the recitation related to the erotic and the comic sentiments, arpaṇa, viceheda, dīpana and praśamana are to be adopted; so also dīpana and praśamana are to be suitably adopted in cases of pathetic sentiment; the sentiments of heroic, fury and wonder should have the liberal employment of viccheda, praśamana, dīpana and anubandha; the sentiments of disgust and terror should have appropriate application of visarga and viccheda. In the Nātyaśāstra there are many other details which we for our purpose need not enter into here. It is, however, obvious that the directions for ceremonial recitation have some affinity with the histrionic processes of the same. Undoubtedly the aim of such recital was to create a congenial atmosphere in the audience-hall. It is interesting to note here that the Pāṇiniyaśikṣā also had similar idea about the reciter and his job. Cf.

“Gīti śighrī śirālkampī tathā-likhitavācakah /
 Anarthajñō’ alpakanṭhaś ca ṣaḍ ete pāṭhakādhamāḥ //
 Mādhuryam akṣaravyaktih padacchedas tu susvarah /
 Dhairyam laya-sāmarthyam ca ṣaḍ ete pāṭhakā gunāḥ” //

(verses 32-33)

Generally the reciter stopped for the day when he finished a canto or chapter or a story.¹⁰⁹

The instructions about the audience are : they should take their bath, besmear their bodies with white unguents, and wear garlands. Attentively and respectfully they should hear the recitation.¹¹⁰ But mere hearing will not do if there is no mutual discussion about the thing they hear.¹¹¹ If there be any doubt, they should gently ask the preceptor who will solve their problems.¹¹² According to the Śāstras the utility of such hearing is that, when a Śāstra is heard from the beginning to the end,

108. “Tatra hāsyā-śringārayor ākāñkṣyām arpaṇa-viccheda-dīpana-praśamanayuktam pāṭhyam kāryam. Dīpana-praśamanayuktam karuṇe. Viccheda-praśamana-dīpanānubandhabahulam vīra-raudrādbhuteṣu. Visarga-vicchedayuktam bibhatsa-bhayānakayor iti” —Loc. cit.

109. “Sargādhyāye samāpte ca kathāparyanta eṣa vā” /
 (Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

110. “Snātaiḥ śuklaiḥ samālabdhaiḥ sravyibhiḥ susamāhitaiḥ /
 Prītiyuktaiḥ tataḥ śravyam śāstram śraddhā-samanvitaiḥ” // —Loc. cit.

111. “Śiṣyaiḥ parasparam śāstram cintānyam vicakṣaṇaiḥ” —Loc. cit.

112. “Mṛduś ca samāsaye jāte prēchet” —Loc. cit.

the heart of the man is filled up with faith and he gets interested in that Śāstra. This makes him free from faults in no time.¹¹³

In the ritual of the gift of learning the guru or the preceptor had a very important role. The required qualifications of a guru sufficiently justify the place of honour allotted to him in the ritual. He should be a pious and wise man endowed with all conceivable virtue, having an impressive personality, amiable in disposition, well-versed in different branches of the Śāstras including the Vedas, and an expert in explaining lucidly the significance of the Śāstras to his disciples. Cf.

“Guruś ca dharmavān prājñāḥ śrutasāstro vimatsarah /
 Viprah prakṛti-saṃsuddhaḥ śuciḥ smitamukhaḥ sadā //
 Suvṛtto vṛtta-śāstrajñāḥ śabdaśāstra-viśāradah /
 Abhyasta-śāstrasandohah prakṛtārtha-pravartakah //
 Adhyāya-sargaviccheda-vibhaktyartha-prayojakah /
 Śāstrārthapadavid dhīmān padaślokārtha-bodhakah //
 Samudāya-prakīrṇārtha-mukhyaśāstrānuṣaṅgajam /
 Anakṣaram ca hṛdvastu vyapadiśyārtha-bodhakah //
 Pakrāntādiś ca (?) Śāstrārtha-vibhāga-pariniṣṭhitah /
 Kaṣṭābhimāna-gūḍhārtha-bhaṅgena ca vibodhakah //
 Śraddheyavāg anālasyah śrotṛvṛtta-prabodhakah” /

(Nandipurāṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)

Different texts speak of the qualifications of the guru much in the same line, of course, varying in some sectarian aspects. The Hayasīrṣa, however, recommends preceptors belonging to Kṣatriya and Vaiśya castes also if suitable Brahmin preceptor is not available. But it strictly prohibits a Śūdra being selected as a preceptor.¹¹⁴

Now, let us turn to the ritual to be performed in connection with the gift of manuscripts. An auspicious day with a good star and an auspicious ‘yoga’, i. e., one of the 27 astronomical divisions of time, should be selected when with due fanfare the ritual of manuscripts should be inaugurated.¹¹⁵ A secluded palace or room should be selected for that purpose. The spot should be cleansed with cowdung, a canopy will be spread overhead and flowers should be strewn for decoration. Then a ‘svastika’ (a mystical figure) should have to be drawn there with rice

113. “Samagra-śāstraśravaṇena pūmsah śraddhā-pradhānam bhavatīha cetaḥ /
 Rāgaś ca śāstrātmakam abhyupaiti doṣāś ca nāśam nimiṣeṇa yānti” //—Loc. cit.

114. “Brāhmaṇānām alābhe tu kṣatriyo vaiśya-śūdrayoh /
 Kṣatriyānām alābhe tu vaiśyah śūdrasya kalpitah //
 Kadācid api śūdras tu na cācāryatvam arhati” // —HŚP., I. ii. 15-16, op. cit.

115. HŚP. II. 31. 2. 42, op. cit.

dyed with five colours. On that place an auspicious 'śarayantra' or a beautiful 'dandāsana' made of gold and studded with gems or a decent throne made of ivory or similar other materials is to be kept for the manuscripts. The preceptor then shall place the two manuscripts on it. One of the manuscripts shall be already written and it will be the original and the other be a blank one meant for writing. Both the manuscripts should be wrapped in a fine piece of silken or coloured cloth. Now, the donor should pay homage to the preceptor with devotion by making gifts of cloth and other articles. At this stage, the Brahmins should write and recite some songs and ballads. The scribe also should be honoured with flowers, fragrants, and cloths; bangles and other articles are to be given to him as presents. Now the preceptor shall worship Viṣṇu with various articles of worship and the donor, in his turn, should worship the preceptor, the book and Hari. Then with the due proclamation of the auspicious day (punyāha-ghoṣena) the work of copying from the original should be started. The scribe shall take his seat facing the East and before starting his work he should meditate the goddess of learning (padmī). Then he should copy five verses to mark the day of inauguration. The Nandipurāṇa¹¹⁶ adds here : just before the commencement of ceremonial writing, the scribe should take his bath, put on a well-bleached cloth and a scarf, wear garlands of flower, he must have a pair of armlets made of gold and inlaid with pearls and in his fingers he should wear some rings. After the copying of five verses the scribe should worship Viśvakarman and the donor with concentrated mind and devotion should worship the preceptor. Then a feast is to be held and the Brahmins should be honoured with 'dakṣinā' in the form of money after the feast. Thus ends the ritual for the day of inauguration. The Devīpuraṇa¹¹⁷ recommends for extending the ceremonies on the day of commencement of writing to the night also. On that day, the donor should keep awake at night along with the others. At night there should be arrangements for various performances including theatrical shows on the theme of the deities concerned, for which actors, dancers, rhapsodists and wandering bards (naṭacāraṇanagnaiś ca) are to be engaged.

Then the work of copying shall continue everyday till the project taken in hand is fully accomplished. Everyday the Goddess of book should be worshipped before the commencement of writing and also at

116. "Lekhako buddhimān snātaḥ śuklapuṣpāmbarojvalaḥ /
Suvarṇa-muktā-keyūro mudrikā-śobhitāngulīḥ" // (Hemādri, op. cit.)

117. "Rātrau jāgaraṇam kuryāt sarva-prekṣām prakalpayet /
Naṭacāraṇanagnaiś ca devyāḥ kathana-sambhavaīḥ" //

—Hemādri, op. cit.; see also Dr. R. C. Hazra, Studies in the Upapurāṇas, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

the end of the work for the day. Everyday the preceptor, the book and the god Hari should be worshipped and saluted by the donor. When the work of copying the whole manuscript will be duly finished, the rites prescribed for the installation of books should be performed.

According to the *Nandipurāṇa*¹¹⁸ after the completion of work of copying there should be again the declaration of the auspicious day (*puṇyāha*) and a grand feast is to be held for the whole day and night. Then the scribe should correct the copy he produced with the help of the reciter so that his copy tallies with the original.

*Devipurāṇa*¹¹⁹ recommends that at this stage the prescribed procedure for worship should be followed and then starts the ritual for installation of manuscripts. A chariot with three, five or seven storeys has got to be built for this purpose. This chariot shall be of the 'sarvatobhadra' type¹²⁰ provided with all auspicious signs and symbols. It will be decorated with variety of cloths and equipped with bells, chowries, tinklers, mirrors, crescent-shaped fastoons (*ardhacandraś ca*), tassels and such other paraphernalia. Incenses and the articles of worship are to be placed there. After the worship the chariot drawn by strong horses shall start its journey round and a big procession of men and women should follow it. After the circumambulation in the chariot the book should be brought to a temple where a ceremony is to be held according to the prescribed rules and then the manuscript should be made over to a properly qualified person as a gift.

The *Hayaśīrṣa*, recommends for a more elaborate ceremony. A decorated pandal provided with basin (*kuṇḍa*), altar (*vedi*) and other

118. "Tataḥ samāpte śāstre tu punaḥ puṇyāha-samyutam /
Kuryāt tat tadahorātre pānabhojana-vastubhiḥ //
Ubhayam cāpi tal lekhyāṇi samikuryāt ca vācakam" // —Loc. cit.
"Ubhayam lekhyāṇi vācayān samikuryāt" /
—Hemādri. See also Studies in the *Upapurāṇas*, Vol. II. op. cit, pp. 484-486.

119. "Tataḥ pūrvokta-vidhinā punaḥ pūjām prakalpayet /
Tathā vidyā-vimānam tu sapta-pañca-tribhūmikam //
Vicitravastraśobhāḍhyam śubhalakṣaṇalakṣitam /
Kārayet sarvatohhadram kinkiṇī-ravakānvitam //
Darpaṇair ardhaṇdraiś ca ghaṇṭā-cāmara-maṇḍitam //
Tasmin dhūpam śamutkṣipyā sugandha-candanāgurum //
Turuṣkam guggulam vatsa śarkarā-madhumīṣritam /
Pūjayed pūrvavat sarvān kanyā-strī-dvija-duḥkhitān" //...
"Mahatā janasaṅghena rathastham dṛḍha-vāhanaiḥ /
Yuvabhiṣ cābhito neyam yasya devasya cāgamacām" //
—Hemādri, loc. cit.

120. This means—'open on all sides'. It may also mean—'auspicious in all respects'.

necessities shall have to be erected for the installation ceremony, according to the prescribed rules.¹²¹ In that pandal a flawless mirror has to be placed on the 'bhadrapiṭha'¹²² situated in the north-east side. The reflection of the book in the mirror should have its ceremonial bath with pitcherful of water in accordance with the rules of 'abhiṣeka' (sprinkling). This is to be done as it has been said that no installation is fruitful without the prescribed bathing. But lest the painting should get spoiled by sprinkling of water, the sprinkling of the reflection in a mirror has been advised in case of idols in painting. For the Manuscripts also the same procedure has been recommended for the same reason. Cf.

"Tasmin sanniveśayed vidvān nirmalam darpanam śubham /
 Tatra saṃdṛṣya tad rūpam snāpayet kramayogataḥ //
 Yasmat snāna-vihinam tu niṣphalam sthāpanam bhavet /
 Citram ca naśyate snānat tasmāt tam pratibimbagam //
 Drṣṭyābhīṣecayet kumbhaiḥ pūrvavat kramayogataḥ" //

(HŚP. II. 30. 4-5, op. cit.)

After the sprinkling, the manuscript should be worshipped according to the rules with chanting of appropriate 'mantras' (sacred formulas), but the procedure for opening the eyes (netronmilanakam) is not to be followed.¹²³ Then the book is to be placed on a bed and there the 'adhivāsa' should be performed.¹²⁴ Then the book is to be brought to the 'maṇḍala' (a mystical diagram) where with appropriate mantras the 'sajiva-karaṇa' is to be performed.¹²⁵ After that it should be worshipped with various articles of worship and 'homa' (oblations to the consecrated fire). Now, the 'caru' (a kind of sacrificial porridge) should be prepared and all assembled there including the donor should partake of it. Cows and pairs of cloths are to be given as sacrificial fees (dakṣinā) at this

121. There are elaborate rules for the erection of the ceremonial pavilion, but the details are not necessary for our purpose here.

122. In the technical sense 'bhadrapiṭha' means—'a pedestal in the central offset'. It may also mean—'a good seat'.

123. The 'netronmilanaka' or the opening of the eyes is an essential part of the worship of icons, specially the anthropomorphic ones. This part of worship has been omitted in case of the manuscript probably because it is not treated as an icon.

124. 'Adhivāsa' is a ceremonial procedure which symbolises the deity being placed in his own abode. According to the Agnipurāṇa (op. cit.)—

"Hareḥ sānnidhya-karaṇam adhivāsanam ucyate" / (60. 1)

125. It is believed that life is instilled into the object of worship by this process.

time. The 'mūrtipas'¹²⁶ and the Brahmins are to be honoured with gifts just in keeping with the financial position of the donor (yathāśaktyā). Then the poor, helpless, and disabled persons should be satisfied with various kinds of gifts. The Devipurāṇa¹²⁷ advises for the honouring of the womenfolk and the worship of virgin girls (kumārīpūjā) on this occasion. The worship of virgin girls is still in vogue in many parts of Bengal on some religious occasions. It also advises that if the donor is a king, he should also honour his citizens in a befitting manner as a part of this ceremony.

Next comes the pageantry in a grand procession. In this procession the manuscript is to be placed either in a chariot, or on the back of an elephant or on any other conveyance available which is to be carried on shoulders of men. Brahmins are to be accommodated there as far as practicable. The carrier used shall be provided with a canopy over it. Decorations with different kinds of flags and banners are to be made there. The procession also shall have a variety of flags and canopies. Conch-shells, drums and different kinds of musical instruments are to be sounded. A party of singers also should form a part of the procession. The king, attended by a bevy of charming ladies with chowries in their hands and followed by his soldiers, should also add grace to the procession. Thus with impressive pomp and grandeur the procession should march round the city. At the end of the journey round, the book is to be brought back either to the house of the donor, or it should be led to a temple or library. The Nandipurāṇa¹²⁸ recommends that the manuscript may also be carried on horse-back in the procession. The conveyance used should be, according to this source, studded with gems decorated with beautiful cloths, equipped with bells, chowries etc. and provided with an umbrella with its stick inlaid with precious stones. There must be playing of various kinds of musical instruments and also provisions for singing and dancing.

126. 'Mūrtipas' are worshippers or custodians of images. Here the term is used possibly to mean the worshippers.

127. "Kanyāḥ striyas tu sampūjya"....."nrpaḥ paurāṁś ca pūjayed" //
(Hemādri, op. cit.)

128. "Āropya yāne ratnāḍhye śubhavastra-pariśkṛte /
Ghaṇṭā-cāmara-śobhāḍhye ratnadaṇḍātapatatriṇi //
Gajavāji-rathastham vā mahāśobhā-samanvitam /
Purato gita-nṛtyena nānāvādyā-raveṇa ca //
Maṅgalair veda-nirghoṣair devāya vinivedayet /
Nānārūpopahāraś ca sampūjya tu divaukasaḥ //
Datvā ca pustakam tatra pitṛṇāṁ dharmam uddiśet" //

—Cited by Hemādri, op. cit.

After that the book should again be worshipped. Then three 'maṇḍalas' are to be drawn. At the centre a throne should be installed and the book should be placed on it. In the second 'maṇḍala' the preceptor should take his seat who shall worship Viṣṇu placed in the third 'maṇḍala'. Then there should be a prayer for the peace of the world (jagacchāntim). The Nandipurāṇa,¹²⁹ however, advises for dedication of the book to gods along with various gifts after worshipping it with the chanting of the Vedas and utterances of auspicious formulas at the end of which there should be references to 'religions of the forefathers'. It recommends the gift of the book to a temple of Śiva.

Now the reciter comes in the forefront. He recites the book in conformity with the prescribed rules before the people assembled there. The king also appears to be present in the gathering.¹³⁰ After reciting a full section he shall stop for the day and pray for the peace of the world. Great emphasis has been laid on the public recitation of books. It has been said that mere copying or installation of books is of no avail if there be no public recitation.¹³¹ Obviously such public recitations were the most effective means of mass education in those days. They were popular too.¹³² Hence the authors of the Śāstras lay so much stress on them.

Then, the preceptor shall sprinkle everybody assembled there including the donor with propitiatory water (sāntyudaka) and receive gold and a pair of cloths as his 'dakṣinā'. The reciter also shall receive a pair of golden bangles and some other covetable things according to his desire. This marks the conclusion of the ceremony of installation of manuscripts.

Now comes the gift of Manuscripts. The manuscripts may be distributed to individuals as gifts, if so desired. The Hayasīrṣa recommends that the manuscripts may be given either to the preceptor or to a properly

129. Hemādri, op. cit.

130. "Vācayet chrāvayed vidvān nṛpatim kārakam tathā" /
—HSP. II. 31. 36, op. cit.

131. "Evam likhed vācayitvā pustakam viṣṇu-tatparaḥ /
Anyathā niṣphalam jñeyam likyite sthāpite hy api" //
—Loc. cit., 31. 42-43.

132. The popularity of such public recitals has been evinced by Bāṇa (7th century A. D.) who tells us that even the queens and princesses were among the audience. Cf. "Adya tu caturdaśiti bhagavantam Mahākālam arcitum ito gatayā tatra Mahābhārata vācyamāne śrutam" (With reference to Queen Vilāsavatī); "Paṭhyamāne ca sarvamaṇgalamahiyasi Mahābhārata dattāvadhānām" (With reference to Kādambarī)—Kādambarī, ed. Siddhāntavāgiśa, 2nd edition, Nakipur, Śak. 1847, pp. 243 & 762-3.

qualified Brahmin. Even if they are meant for one's own use, the same procedure is to be followed. They also may be given to a Viṣṇu temple.¹³³ For the qualifications of the recipient it has been laid down that he should be a Brahmin, wise, intelligent, well-versed in the Vedic lore, engaged in teaching and also a man of commendable character.¹³⁴ Devīpurāṇa¹³⁵ adds that the manuscript of a particular subject should be given to a man who is devoted to that subject. Such a donee should be always engaged in learning, in the habit of diligently acquiring knowledge, a master of Śāstric lores and devoted to teaching. The Agnipurāṇa¹³⁶ seems to summarise the whole procedure as given in the Hayaśīraṣa. The Vahnipurāṇa¹³⁷ recommends the gift of manuscripts to qualified persons along with gems, milch cows, cloths, ornaments and various other gifts on an auspicious day, or on the day of eclipse of the Sun or the Moon, or on the day when the Sun passes from one Zodiacal sign to the other, or on the day of solstice.

After the gift of the manuscript there comes the occasion for feast and festivity which should be held in a grand scale quite in keeping with the resources of the donor. These are to be held, according to the Nandipurāṇa,¹³⁸ by the king in his city, by the headsman in his village,

133. “Evam likhed ātmano’ rthe dadyād evam janārdane /
Viṣṇurūpāya gurave dadyād vā dvijapuṇgave //
Viṣṇujñānābhiyuktāya vedasnātāya dharminē” //
—op. cit., II. 31. 43-44.

134. “Brāhmaṇasya suvṛttasya vācakasya vijalpataḥ /
Anena vidhinā dattvā”... (Varāhapuraṇa, Hemādri, op. cit.)
“Anenaiva vidhānena Brāhmaṇaḥ śīlaśālini /
Prabodhayati dhīyukte yuktajñe vedavādini //
Vinyaset tu śubham sāstram mahāpuṇya-jigīṣayā” //
—Nandipurāṇa, loc. cit.

135. “Sadādhyayanayuktāya vidyādānaratāya ca /
Vidyāsaṁgrahayuktāya kṛta-sāstraśramāya ca” // —Hemādri, op. cit.
“Tenaiva vartate yas tu tasya tam vinivedayet” / —Loc. cit.

136. Op. cit., 63. 13 ff.

137. “Candrasūryoparāge va saṃkrāntyayanavāsare /
Punye’hni tat susampūjya vastrālaṃkāra-bhūṣaṇaiḥ //
Gṛītadhenvā yutam ratnair dadyād guṇavate tataḥ” //
(Hemādri, op. cit.)

138. “Tataś ca bhakṣayed vīprān rudrabhaktāmpśca mānavān /
Yathāśakti ca kartavya utsavaḥ sveṣu veṣmasu //
Rājñā tu nagare kāryā grāme grāmādhipais tathā /
Gṛhe gṛhasthaiḥ kartavyā utsuvā bandhubhīḥ saha” //
(Hemādri, op. cit.)

by the householder in his own house, in company with the friends and relatives.

This system of gift of manuscripts is surely one of the factors that contributed to the growth of libraries, specially the private libraries, in our country in the bygone ages.

The ritual of manuscripts retains for us a picture that opens before us a forgotten chapter of our religio-social history evincing the attitude of the society towards the advancement of learning and the measures adopted for the diffusion and encouragement of education.